

The Heron

Quarterly Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 31 Number 4 Fall 2009

Sustainable Funding For Conservation - Coming To A Vote

On February 21, 2008, Senate Study Bill 3217, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Iowa Constitution to protect a portion of state revenue for natural resources, was introduced. The bill passed the Senate Natural Resource Committee unanimously. As a follow up, legislators introduced Senate Joint Resolution 2002, a Joint Resolution that proposed an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Iowa to dedicate a portion of state revenue for the benefit of the state's natural resources. It also establishes the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. *It is important to note that SJR2002 does not raise taxes and it is an opportunity for the people to vote to protect funding for natural resources.* The trust fund would allocate 3/8th of one cent from any future increases in sales tax made by the State Legislature, providing the Trust Fund an estimated \$150 million per year for conservation efforts.

In Iowa, a constitutional amendment needs to pass two different General Assemblies before it can go to a vote of the people. In both 2008 and 2009, Iowa legislators overwhelmingly voted in favor of SJR 2002. Ninety percent of legislators voted yes! Now, Iowans will have a historical opportunity to vote on the constitutional amendment for a sustainable source of conservation funding in 2010. The purpose of the trust fund is to establish a permanent, reliable and accountable method for protecting vital natural resources. The trust fund would be dedicated to water quality, soil conservation and other conservation enhancement programs. The fund would be accountable to Iowans through a public oversight committee, annual audits and performance reviews for the legislature.

The plan is the result of years of research and legislative work. In 2006, an advisory committee looked into the possibility of a sustainable funding source for outdoor recreation, conservation and natural resources. The committee determined that a conservative estimate of \$150 million dollars annually would meet the needs

of parks and trails, soil and water conservation and fish, wildlife and natural areas protection. It has been estimated that the impact on the average taxpayer in Iowa would be about 8 cents a day, with nearly half of the revenue coming from business and travelers.



This funding would have a tremendous impact on several conservation programs. Among these:

- **REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection).** \$20 million additional funds to meet the demands on REAP. This would provide \$40 million from current and future sources and could mean an increase of \$25,000 to Clinton County.
- **Local Conservation Partnership Program.** \$20 million for habitat protection and conservation, infrastructure needs, conservation education, and nature interpretation at the local level. \$12 million would be made available to County Conservation Boards, \$5 million to nongovernmental organizations and \$3 million to cities.
- **Watershed Protection.** \$20 million to improve and encourage a watershed approach to solving water quality environmental problems.
- **Lakes Restoration.** \$10 million additional for lake restoration needs.
- **Trails.** \$15 million for the addition of new hiking, walking, biking, and water trails, and maintenance of existing trails.
- **Natural Resources Management.** \$35 million additional to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for identified needs in state parks, state preserves, wildlife areas, state forests, wildlife habitats, wildlife diversity program, access for hunting and other recreational activities, technical assistance from forestry, fisheries and wildlife biologists through private landowner programs and incentives, water trails, river and streams programs, natural resources outreach including natural history interpretation in the parks and natural areas, angling opportunities, conservation law enforcement, recreational safety programs, etc.
- **Agriculture and Land Stewardship.** \$30 million additional to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to meet the identified demand for the soil conservation and watershed protection programs the Department administers.



In the past, a consensus that Iowans support these goals has been apparent. Iowans have overwhelmingly said that they support protecting land, water and recreational opportunities. This is critical to the state's economic vitality, and 75% support increased funding for those purposes. Over the next 12 months, you will likely be hearing a lot more about sustainable funding for conservation and the Natural Resource and Outdoors Recreation Trust Fund. Please take some time to learn all the facts and then cast your vote on this historic amendment next November.

Hello / Goodbye

by Katie van der Linden, former Clinton County Summer Intern, current Wapsi River Center Americorps Naturalist

The first day of my internship seems so long ago, in reality it was only three months. I seemed to have learned so much in these short three months. I did not grow up near the Mississippi River and never really spent time around it. It has been an adventure getting to know it.

I have learned how to drive a boat and built up the confidence to lead two of my own Blue Heron eco cruises. My favorite part of the cruises has always been to show the Bald Eagle nest and hope to get a glimpse of one of the parents or the immature birds. I have done numerous programs of my own since the start of my internship.

One program that always seemed to attract the public was snakes. People of all ages seemed to be interested in snakes. I spent some time collecting snakes for the program and I became very familiar with one species in particular, the northern water snake. For those of you who don't know what a water snake is they are a non-venomous snake that are very common along the Mississippi backwaters as well as ponds, lakes, and marshes. They are known



for their nasty tempers and bites. Naturalist Chuck and I were canoeing and spotted one sunning itself, so we pulled the canoe up and I grabbed the snake near the tail end; he was not happy. He whipped around and sunk his teeth right into my hand and didn't let go. I pried him off and placed him in a snake bag.

I have learned so much since the start of my internship. Thank you to all of you who have come to my programs and made them successful. It has been an amazing experience for me and I know now that conservation and being a naturalist is the right field for me. I can't imagine myself doing anything else.

I moved to De Witt without knowing anyone and all the Clinton County Conservation Board has become like my second family. I will miss all of them, luckily I'm not going too far. I have accepted a two-year Americorps naturalist position at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.



20 Things I Have Done and Learned in the Summer '09

by Katie van der Linden, former Clinton County Summer Intern, current Wapsi River Center Americorps Naturalist

20. Learned that if you stick your finger in a snake's mouth it WILL bite!.

19. Discovered pike have SHARP teeth (even dead ones)!

18. Jumped out of a canoe, chased down a turtle and caught it with my bare hands.

17. Saved a Cooper's hawk tangled in a net covering strawberry plants.

16. Listened to the most interesting rendition of Old Man River I have ever heard.

15. Learned how to cast, by playing a plastic fishing game (it's addicting too).

14. Drove a flat bottom boat!

13. Saw an eagle nest complete with parents and juveniles multiple times.

12. Jumped into the Mississippi with all my clothes on multiple times (good times).

11. Soaked my phone in the Mississippi and it miraculously survived.

10. Learned what rooster tail was.

9. Got a 30-passenger pontoon boat stuck.

8. Got a 30-passenger pontoon boat unstuck.

7. Successfully lead my own sunset cruise while driving the pontoon boat solo.

6. Saw a river otter's butt as he waddled into the woods.

5. Tamed two wild snakes; blue racer and bull snake.

4. Designed and led my own public programs.

3. Drove a big truck (F150) .

2. Caught 3 water snakes and was bit by 2 of them.

1. Moved to a new place where I knew absolutely no one and met an amazing group of new friends...priceless.

However I still have never caught a fish...

First Annual Mississippi Eco Tourism Catfish Tournament

by Marty Murrell, Clinton County Foundation Treasurer

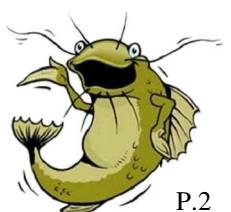
On Sunday, August 30th the Clinton County Conservation Foundation hosted the inaugural Rock Creek Catfish Classic. The purpose of the tournament was to raise awareness and funds on behalf of the Mississippi River Eco-Tourism Center.



To recall the weather of late August, this was right after most of the area received 5+ inches of rain, and the Wapsi was ripping through Rock Creek Marina. Despite the recent inclement weather, the day started off clear and crisp as 20 boats and 40 participants entered the tournament for a day of catfishing.

With the water high, fast, and cool, the fishing proved to be challenging. After seven hours on the water, the weigh-in netted 78 total fish with a total weight of 119 pounds. The winning team of Mark Sanders and Bob Schoemaker brought in their 10 fish limit, with a total weight of 21.3 pounds. Two individuals landed 7-pound cats to tie for the biggest fish category.

Deemed a successful and fun tournament by the contestants, the Foundation plans to continue the event in 2010. Look for more information next summer, and also for the Catfish Classic to be part of a catfish tournament trail series sponsored by www.WhereIFish.com.



Animal Profile ~ Skunks

by Angie Petersen, Northeast High School Senior



You've heard about them, you've seen them, and you've definitely smelt them. Skunks have the best-known and most distinctive self-defense weapon. But they do give you a warning before leaving you stained for good.

Skunks come from the weasel family (*Mustelidae*), which also includes ferrets, otters, badgers, and relatives. There are a total of ten different species of skunks in the world. They are divided into four groups: two species of hooded and striped skunks (*Mephitis*), two species of spotted skunks (*Spilogale*), two species of stink badgers (*Mydaus*) and four species of hog-nosed skunks (*Conepatus*). The two species of skunks in the *Mydaus* group inhabit Indonesia and the Philippines, whereas the other skunk species inhabit the Americas from Canada to Central South America. The most common species in the United States and Iowa is the striped skunk. The scientific name for striped skunk is *Mephitis mephitis*. Iowa is also home to the spotted skunk, *Spilogale putorius*, though it is on endangered list for the state.



The word "skunk" is a coined word of Algonquian origin. Thomas Hariot, an author, published his *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* in 1588 which included the first list of Algonquian

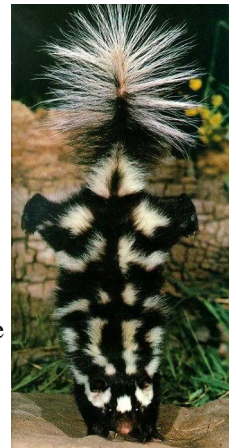
Indian words translated into English. Most of his translations did not make it into the English vocabulary, but we can recognize the beginnings of modern skunk in the word *saquenúckot*. He describes it as one of the "two kinds of small beasts greater than conies (rabbits)."

As the sun goes down and our day is about to end, skunks, who are nocturnal, are waking up and emerging from their underground dens. These dens are lined with dry leaves and are generally found in areas with a mix of woods, grasslands, and agricultural clearings. With the sun down, the striped skunks begin to search for food. They are true omnivores so their diets consist of insects, caterpillars, crickets, grasshoppers, beetles,

fruits, grains, grasses, leaves, birds and their eggs, and small mammals such as mice, rats, and other small rodents. Striped skunks are opportunistic and their diet changes depending on the time of year and the available resources.

Because a skunk's fur is mostly black, they are hidden fairly well when hunting or roaming around at night. On a striped skunk, the white stripe that falls down its back begins as a thin line down the center of its face, then forms as a triangular shape on the top of the head. It then forks into two stripes that travel down the sides of the back, forming a V, and usually merges again near the base of the tail. Most striped skunks grow from 13 to 18 inches long, not including the tail, and weigh from 3 to 10 pounds. A hog-nosed skunk looks similar to a striped skunk, but the hog-nosed skunk has a bare, protruding snout and lacks a face stripe. Some of these skunks have an entirely white back and tail. Most hog-nosed skunks grow from 14 to 19 inches long and weigh from 4 to 10 pounds. The spotted skunk is the smallest kind of skunk. It has large white blotches all over its body. A triangular patch of white marks the forehead. Spotted skunks grow from 7 to 14 inches long and weigh just 1 to 3 pounds. Unlike the striped or hog-nosed species, the spotted skunk can climb, and it sometimes lives in hollow trees. Female skunks will usually have litters sizing from 6 to 10 young. They are born blind, and are weaned at six or seven weeks.

Surprisingly, skunks will only spray a possibly harmful predator after giving them plenty of warning. The spotted skunk is famed for its "handstand", a warning attitude consisting of standing on its front paws, rump high in the air. As with other skunks, they will stamp their front paws and repeatedly hiss or growl. Their black and white coloration acts as a warning sign as well. If the intruder does not take the hint, the spray! They can only spray up to 15 feet, but the smell can carry a mile. One animal that takes no consideration to the foul smell is the great-horned owl, mainly because it has a poor-to-nonexistent sense of smell.



Spotted skunk

Skunk tracks show five toes on the front foot and five on the hind foot. The front tracks will usually show claw marks because the claws on the front feet are much longer than the back feet. Skunks use the long claws to dig up roots, insects, and sometimes to make a new den.

The skunks' tactic of spraying seems to work against dangerous and life-threatening predators but does not work against nature's conditions. Up to 90% of skunks do not make it through their first winter. In the wild, skunks may live to be 2 or 3 years old. In captivity, they have been known to survive for up to fifteen years.

We know the obvious reasons as to how skunks show negative impact on us as humans. They produce a nauseating smell, they dig up our lawns, knock over our trash bins, and seem to cross the road at the wrong time. But one positive way they impact our lives is that, while they are digging in our lawns and through our garbage, they are helping eliminate insect and rodent pests that cause destruction of our crops and our homes.



Autumn Outings



October

8th ~ Fall Color Eco Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to reserve a spot. Cost is \$6/adult & \$4/child under 16.



10th ~ Wapsipinicon River Float ~ 10 AM-3 PM ~ Wapsi River Center access to Allen's Grove Park ~ Join the Scott County naturalists for this rescheduled 10-mile canoe trip down one of the last wildy scenic and free-flowing rivers left in Iowa. Participants are required to have canoe experience and must register by Thursday, October 8th as there is a limited number of spaces by calling 563-328-3286. Please meet at Allen's Grove Landing 4.5 miles north of Donahue, IA. Participants must bring adequate water, sunscreen, appropriate clothing and a sack lunch. This float is weather and river dependant and we will provide canoes, paddles, life jackets and cooler for lunches. For more info on Iowa DNR water trails visit www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/index.

10th ~ The 27th Annual Eden Valley Bluegrass Jam ~ Noon-9 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ It will be a toe-tapping time as musicians from the surrounding areas gather to bring the bluegrass sound to listeners of all ages. The 27th Annual Bluegrass Jam will be held at the Eden Valley Refuge campground along Bear Creek. If inclement weather, the program will be held in the nature center. A potluck and chili dinner will start at 4 PM; bring table service and your lawn chair. This event is free and open to all. For more information, call Mary McAndrew at 563-343-7002.



15th ~ Fall Color Eco Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to reserve a spot. Cost is \$6/adult & \$4/child under 16.

17th ~ Fall Color Float ~ 12 PM ~ Wapsipinicon State Park to Newport Mills Access ~ This 7.15-mile stretch of river has towering limestone bluffs that should be decked in brilliant fall color. Late season paddling trips should be attempted by those with good paddling skills. The water may be as cold as 45 degrees and the air temperature low as well. This is no time for a swim or rescue drill. Interested persons should call 563-847-7202 to register and/or reserve our paddling equipment free of charge.



17th ~ Eighteenth Annual Ecology Day ~ 1-10 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Bring the whole family, invite a friend and plan to attend this family-oriented event. Call 563-328-3286 to register.



- **1 PM ~ Renewable Rain** ~ River Action will show six simple things to do to save our water ways. Participants will learn the benefits of using a rain barrel and how you can use one in your own backyard.
- **2 PM ~ "Hands On" Paper Making** ~ Join Paula Mullin, Education Specialist at the Waste

Commission of Scott County, for a lesson on paper making. Create beautiful works of art to take home or send to a friend.

- **3 PM ~ The Million Trees Project** ~ Join Denise Mitten, Program Coordinator from Living Lands & Waters to learn about tree identification, seed collection and storage and how to start seedlings. Learn how *The Million Trees Project* assists Chad Pregracke's river clean up efforts as well as plant a seed to take home!
- **4 PM ~ Solar Cooking Demonstration** ~ Join Brian Ritter, Naturalist at the Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station and Mike Granger, Wapsi River Center Naturalist, for a lesson on solar cooking. See how easy it is to prepare excellent dishes via energy harnessed from the sun!
- **5 PM ~ Supper** ~ Join us for a fall harvest meal provided and funded by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. For this delicious dinner, donations are welcome!
- **6-9 PM ~ Rhythmic Recyclables & Wilderness Music** ~ Learn how to harness the musical quality of everyday items with Lisa Gerwulf, Wapsi River Center Naturalist. Participants will create different musical instruments using only recycled items. Then try out your "green" musical skills with the talented guitarist Chuck Jacobsen, Clinton County Conservation Naturalist, as he introduces participants to "Wilderness Music" from artists John Denver, Charles McGuire and others.
- **9 PM ~ Eastern Iowa Star Party** ~ The Quad City Astronomical Society hosts this annual event at the Monsignor Menke Astronomical Observatory. They invite the public to join them for this celestial celebration.



22nd ~ Fall Color Eco Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to reserve a spot. Cost is \$6/adult & \$4/child under 16. This will be our last public Thursday evening cruise of the year.

24th ~ Women's Outdoor Day ~ 9 AM-4 PM~ Rock Creek ~ Activities will include if weather allows, but is not limited, to a ride on the Blue Heron Eco-Cruiser where we can explore a shore or island, practice your canoeing & kayaking skills, find a geocache using GPS and much more. This workshop is \$6 and for women 16 years or older. Bring your own sack lunch or buy lunch at the camp store. For more details, questions and to register by October 22nd please call 563-847-7202.

24th ~ Big World of Little Mammals ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come survey the small mammals of the Wapsi Center by checking live traps with AmeriCorps naturalist Katie van der Linden. Discover tiny inhabitants you may have never seen before.



24th ~ Birds of Prey ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Director Dave Murcia in learning about native birds of prey. Our newest inhabitant, a great horned owl, will be included in this program along with an eastern screech owl and the most common of our falcons, the American kestrel.

25th ~ Fall Fest & Hocus-Pocus Hike ~ 3-8 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Pumpkin carving, a weenie roast, campfire music and hayrack ride makes this annual event fun for the whole family. In addition, Prairie Pastures Dog Park will have special activities earlier in the day. Any voluntary donations will be greatly appreciated. Everyone is invited to enjoy a “spooktacular” night hike with jack-o-lanterns lighting the way starting on the hour every hour from 4—7 PM.



27th ~ Creepy Cave Creep & Campfire ~ 6 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Meet at the nature center and carpool to Werden’s Cave for a naturalist-lead creepy-crawl-about. This will mark the end of our cave-tour season. Afterwards, bake the cave clay into your jeans around a warm cookfire. You supply the treats and we’ll bring the roasting forks and musical entertainment. There is no fee but you must call 563-847-7202 to register.

29th ~ Creatures of the Darkness Hike ~ 6:30 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Learn how to make the most of your night vision, then take a festive and spooky stroll through Jack-o-Lantern Woods. Along the way, participants will become better acquainted with creatures that go bump in the night. Participants are asked to meet at Redtail Lodge, and reminded to dress according to the weather conditions.



November

4th ~ Conservation Kids ~ Silly Salamanders ~ 2 PM ~ Felix Adler Children’s Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school age children. There will be some live animals with a story, hands-on activity and snack. Conservation Kids is a collaboration with Children’s Discovery Center’s Early Out Reading Group and is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, IA, near Hy-Vee. Admission to this event is free of charge, if you have any questions please call the Clinton County Conservation naturalists at 563-847-7202.

5th ~ STARLAB / Stellarium ~ 7 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Nothing replaces the real brilliance of the heavens when viewed from a dark corner of the countryside. But it’s nice to know what to look for while you’re out there. You are invited to explore the night skies from a warm and dry seat in STARLAB (a 10-foot tall inflatable dome with projected stars and constellations) and view the solar system and other objects through the technology of *Stellarium*.

6th ~ Kindernature ~ Silly Salamanders ~ 10:30 AM ~ Felix Adler Children’s Discovery Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be some live animals with a story, hands-on activity and snack. Kindernature is a collaboration with

Children’s Discovery Center’s Fun Time Friday and is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, IA near Hy-Vee. Admission to this event is free of charge, if you have any questions please call the Clinton County Conservation naturalists at 563-847-7202.

7th ~ Totally Trees ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about our local trees on this fall hike. Learn to identify trees by looking at seeds, leaves and bark. To warm your spirits, enjoy some hot apple cider after the hike.

7th ~ Green Gifts ~ 1:30 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Lisa Gerwulf, Wapsi Center naturalist, for an afternoon of creative creations. The whole idea behind green gifts is saving money and getting the whole family involved in creating those unique, homemade gifts. Green gift ideas will come from some unlikely sources including the recycle bin, trash can, remodeling project leftovers, closet, attic, basement, garage and many others. Participants will have the opportunity to view several different ideas, as well as create some make-and-take projects of their own. Whether you’re an avid crafter, recycler, or just someone looking for an unique gift, this is the program for finding that perfect project! Pre-registration is required by calling 563-328-3286, no later than November 5th.

7th ~ Bald Eagle Eco Cruise ~ 1 PM

~ Rock Creek ~ This will be the public’s last opportunity this year to take an Eco Cruise on the Blue Heron Pontoon Boat. The American bald eagles are starting to congregate along the Mississippi for the winter, and we hope to see several of the birds, plus many other species, during the cruise. Before freeze-up, the bald eagles are spread out along the river and the best way to see them is to go to them via boat. Call 563-847-7202 to register.



12th ~ STARLAB / Stellarium ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Nothing replaces the real brilliance of the heavens when viewed from a dark corner of the countryside. But it’s nice to know what to look for while you’re out there. You are invited to explore the night skies from a warm and dry seat in STARLAB (a 10-foot tall inflatable dome with projected stars and constellations) and view the solar system and other objects through the technology of *Stellarium*. There will be refreshments to enjoy too!

13th ~ Kindernature ~ White-tailed Deer ~ 10 AM ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be hands-on displays, story, craft and snack. DeWitt Community Center located at 512 10th St. in DeWitt, IA, right across from the library.

19th ~ Recycled Bird Feeders ~ 6:30 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Fall is a great time to get set up for winter feeding. Milk jugs, cartons and pop bottles will be magically transformed into useful feeders. Types of seeds, common winter inhabitants and home-made bird treats will be discussed.

Participants are asked to bring clean milk jugs (paper or plastic) or 20 oz. to 2-liter pop bottles, and reserve your spot



by November 17th by calling 563-328-3286.

21st ~ Bird Feeder Workshop ~ 1 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Prepare yourself for a season of fun by fixing up that old bird feeder or creating new ones. Learn the dos and don'ts of backyard bird feeding and how you can get involved in yearly bird counts from the warmth of your own home. Materials will be available to get your old feeder going again or you may order kits to create new feeders. Prices range from \$2 - \$20 or you can bring in a used bottle or carton and fashion a free feeder from that. Call 563-847-7202 to order your kit and register.

28th ~ Woodland Creations ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come and learn how twigs, bark, seeds and leaves can be used to create miniature figurines. Make people, animals or whatever your creative spirit can come up with. Please call 563-328-3286 to register your family by November 26th.

December

Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing ~ As weather conditions allow, check the local media for cross-country skiing and snowshoe outings throughout the winter. Or, for those with e-mail addresses, write cjacobsen@clintoncounty-ia.gov and place yourself on our handy adventurers' list. Adventurers will receive a short message whenever snow events are planned.

December 2nd ~ Conservation Kids ~ Wiggly Worms ~ 2 PM ~ Felix Adler Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school age children. There will be some live wiggly worms with cocoons, story, craft and snack. Conservation Kids is a collaboration with Children's Discovery Center's Early Out Reading Group and is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, IA, near Hy-Vee. Admission to this event is free of charge, if you have any questions please call the Clinton County Conservation naturalists at 563-847-7202.



4th ~ Kindernature ~ Wiggly Worms ~ 10:30 AM ~ Felix Adler Children's Discovery Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be some live wiggly worms with cocoons, story, craft and snack. Kindernature is a collaboration with Children's Discovery Center's Fun Time Friday and is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, IA, near Hy-Vee. Admission to this event is free of charge, if you have any questions please call the Clinton County Conservation naturalists at 563-847-7202.

5th - 9th ~ Deer Hunt ~ A reminder that the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center will be closed to the public during this scheduled deer hunt.

10th ~ The Madagascar Experience ~ 6:30 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ AmeriCorps naturalist, Katie van der Linden, will share her three-week experience in Madagascar through photos. Amazing lemurs, chameleons and boa constrictors were a few of the natural highlights. This isn't like any *DreamWorks* movie you've ever seen!

11th ~ Kindernature ~ Fur Coats ~ 10 AM ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county

residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be hands on displays, story, craft and snack. DeWitt Community Center located at 512 10th St. in DeWitt, IA, right across from the library.

12th ~ Cross Country Ski Clinic ~ 9:30 AM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Director Dave Murcia at Redtail Lodge and learn the basics of cross country skiing. The program will give a beginner the basics including safety, techniques, equipment and practical use of skis/boots. This program is weather dependant; please register by December 9th at 563-328-3286 to reserve equipment at no cost!

12th ~ Natural Ornaments ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Decorate your home this year with ornaments made from natural materials. Participants will collect a variety of natural items and learn how to create some festive decorations for your home. Fun for the whole family! Pre-register by calling 563-328-3286 by December 10th.



January

8th - 10th ~ Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days ~ This huge, annual event showcasing our national symbol, the American bald eagle, also involves various wildlife artists, information booths and various live animal presentations. The event is held at the QCCA Expo Center at 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, from 4-8 PM on Friday, January 8th, 10AM-7 PM on Saturday, January 9th and 10 AM-5 PM on Sunday, January 10th. The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center's booth is always a favorite with hands-on activities and live animals.

9th ~ The 26th Annual Bald Eagle Watch ~ 9 AM-2:30 PM ~ Clinton Community College ~ The program is

dedicated to the understanding, appreciation, and protection of our national symbol. Naturalists and volunteers will be on hand to share their enthusiasm and knowledge of these and other natural wonders.

Programs will feature lectures, videos, songs, stories, and live birds of prey. The exhibit hall will feature wildlife exhibits, children's activities and door prizes, food and drink. Schedule of Events include eagle watching at Lock #13 north of Fulton, IL from 8:30 AM-3:30 PM, exhibits and programs from 9 AM-2:30 PM at Clinton Community College, 1000 Lincoln Blvd., Clinton, IA. If you have questions call 815-259-3628, or 815-273-2732.



- **9:30 AM** "Listen to the Eagles' Message" Video Thomson Park Ranger
- **10:00 AM** *Birds of Prey* Tom Hill, Atwood Nature Center, Rockford Park District
- **11:15 AM** *Kid's Nature Program*
- **12:00 PM** *Nature Music / Songs* Chuck Jacobsen, Naturalist, Clinton Co. Conservation
- **12:30 PM** *Birds of Prey*

A Look Back

By Eric Wright, Park Officer

Ah, duck season is here and that can only mean that the camping season is wrapping up. As I look back at this past season several things come to mind. The season began with good news as the typical spring high water stayed within the banks here on the Mississippi. A much-needed break after last year's floods. Everyone came out early for the first holiday and continued to show their patronage throughout the summer.

For the most part everything stayed on schedule this summer. The docks were in on time and the weather allowed for the park to look the best it has ever looked for Memorial Day weekend. Memorial Day weekend saw every site in the campground full by Tuesday night through Wednesday morning. I have to admit that was the best group of campers I have ever dealt with for a long holiday weekend. Everyone was polite and very respectful to their fellow campers. The 4th of July and Labor Day holidays

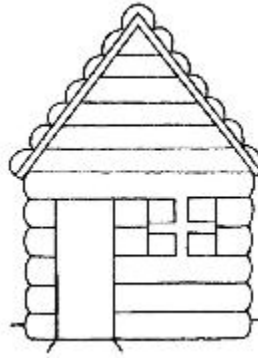


brought out large crowds as well. They were the typical holidays keeping everyone in the park busy.

Over the past five years I have noticed an issue with underage drinking in the parks. This is nothing unusual and I have seen it everywhere I have been. However I have noticed a rise in the numbers over the last few years. So this year I took a zero tolerance approach towards this issue. My goal is to help reduce the usage by underage subjects. By reducing the number of underage drinkers hopefully it will reduce the number of people who become addicted to alcohol. I believe a lot of subjects who have alcohol or drug problems start early and start with alcohol. Ultimately I would like to see the trend in this area to be reversed and

consequently resulting in a better place to live, work and recreate. With that said numerous people found out how expensive it is to be caught drinking under the legal age.

Visitors to the park may have noticed a few projects that were going on during late summer. The F.E.M.A. projects from last year's flooding have been completed. The ground near the lower end of the campground and trail has been eroding little by little each flood. Riprap was placed along the section closest to the road and nature trail leading out to the point. The entire nature trail was covered in new mulch and groomed. Four of the small cabins have been re-sided with log siding and will soon be moved, elevated and have new decks built. Campsites one through twelve are being upgraded to 50-30-20 amp pedestals and are being renovated.



I have to give a big thanks to my maintenance crew, store workers and hosts for helping make this year an enjoyable success. We strive to make our parks a safe, enjoyable place to visit and without a lot of hard work by these people we wouldn't be able to do that. One last thank you goes out to Howard and Audrey Miller for their dedication as campground hosts for the past three summers! Howard believes it is time to get out of the camping business and fully retire. Look out Bellevue, the Mayor of Spruce Creek just might be in town everyday for coffee. The staff and visitors will miss the Miller's and the entertainment they brought over the years.



Take A Kid Fishing

By Eric Wright, Park Officer

In early June I was fortunate enough to be accompanied in the boat by Josh and Jacob Stearns for an afternoon of walleye fishing on the Mississippi River. It was a warm day shortly after school was out when Jacob was down at the park and told me he was bored. Not that I need much motivation to go fishing but those words were enough to get the boat.



As two youngsters, Josh and Jacob have done plenty of fishing but they have never specifically targeted walleye. The bite had been consistent for a few weeks and the weather was perfect. As I explained to the boys how we were going to catch fish I could tell they were getting excited. My

only fear was that after talking it up the fish weren't going to cooperate. Luckily they did.

I didn't even have all the poles in the water when the first fish was on. A nice 18-inch walleye was in the net and high fives were going around the boat. Josh and Jacob caught several species that day including walleye and a small muskellunge. By the end of the day both boys were wore out by reeling in fish. We ended up keeping six walleye for the dinner table and released over twenty fish that day.

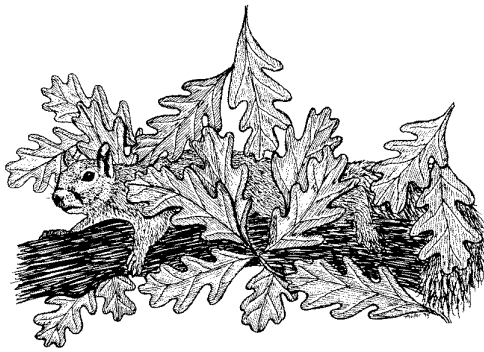


Take a kid fishing and get them hooked for life!

Clinton County Conservation
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Phone: 563-847-7202
Email: conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov
Website: www.clintoncounty-ia.gov

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HAPPY HUNTING SEASON!

County Areas

Ben Martinsen Wildlife Area ~ 446 acres
Lost Nation Public Hunting Area ~ 260 acres
Ringneck Marsh Wildlife Area ~ 160 acres
McAndrews Wildlife Area ~ 198 acres
Manikowski Prairie ~ 185 acres
Sherman Park ~ 232 acres

State Areas

Barber Creek Wildlife Area ~ 942 acres
Goose Lake Wildlife Area ~ 1,212 acres
Syracuse Wildlife Area ~ 709 acres
Wapsi Wildlife Area ~ 86 acres

Federal Areas

Upper Mississippi Natl Wildlife
Refuge ~ 8,192 acres

MAILING LIST

If you'd like to get "*The Heron*" contact the CCCB. It is mailed to County addresses free. Others are charged \$5 annually or is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

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BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board meets the second Tuesday the month, 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 230th Ave. and 255th St. Please note, this date and time can be changed.

